



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

GENERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

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USAID Health Staff Honored by Mir Masjidi Khan Award

On February 18th, Mohammad Zahir Shah, the former King of Afghanistan, bestowed one of the highest civilian awards to USAID's Social Sector Reform Director Dr. Jim Sarn and his colleague, Senior Health Advisor Jim Griffin.

The Afghan Ministry of Public Health nominated Griffin and Sarn for the *Mir Masjidi Khan* award for their dedication and outstanding performance.

"Jim Sarn and Jim Griffin are true professionals and this award recognizes the long hours of work and tireless efforts they have put into the USAID/Afghanistan health program," commented Mission Director Alonzo Fulgham. "Working for two years far from their families, their work has provided basic health care services, increased maternal and neonatal care, and improved lives for thousands of Afghan families."



Photos: USAID/Angela Franklin Lord
USAID/Afghanistan Senior Health Advisor Jim Griffin (left) and Social Sector Reform Director Jim Sarn (right) display the Mir Masjidi awards. The Health Program Specialist, Dr. Faiz, stands in the middle.

Extending Partnerships and Boosting Skills

USAID and other government agencies met with the Afghan Government for a Strategic Partnership Conference on March 20-21 in Washington, D.C. Officials discussed security, prosperity and governance to improve the effectiveness of aid.

Improving Afghan capabilities and management systems will create an environment for development to succeed over the long term. USAID programs build the skills of Afghan counterparts working in health, agriculture, commerce, and other ministries. These projects enhance administrative and procurement processes to increase accountability and promote good governance. Programs also focus on policy-making and program capacity.

To supplement these ongoing activities, USAID is launching the new Afghans Building Capacity (ABC) program. ABC will support Afghan institutions such as ministries and local governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and universities as they strengthen their core capabilities. It will link U.S., Afghan, and regional universities into networks to enhance Afghan institutions. ABC will provide merit scholarships for study in the U.S., Afghanistan, and other countries.

"Mr. James E. Sarn and Mr. James L. Griffin have played a major role in the reconstruction efforts in the health sector, construction of health clinics, and provision of health services in thirteen provinces of the country. They have also developed human capacities in the Ministry of Public Health."

--Hamid Karzai,
President of the Islamic
Republic of Afghanistan

To view a recent documentary about USAID projects for women in Afghanistan, Lebanon and the Philippines, visit http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/iwd.html



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Photos: USAID/Afghanistan



Participants gather to discuss ways to strengthen civil society at recent roundtables hosted by USAID. Mr. Rasheed (above), Dr. Fatah Mamnoon and Shakiba Hashimi (below) address participants.

Strengthening Civil Society

USAID and an implementing partner have been coordinating roundtable discussions nationwide for Afghans to share ideas about rebuilding their societies. The roundtables have connected representatives from local government, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, media, tribal leaders, district *shura* representatives, and youth organizations.

In Kabul last January, Ms. Shakiba Hashimi from the National Assembly and Dr. Fatah Mamnoon from USAID led a session where attendees discussed constraints on civil society and recommended ways to overcome obstacles. Many described illiteracy as a major barrier. Participants also expressed the need to strengthen civil society to live a free, peaceful life. At an earlier roundtable in Nangarhar province, Afghans described tolerance, rule of law, and respecting citizens' rights as important values to be developed.

Ideas from these roundtables are being compiled into a report and translated into local languages for dissemination across the country.

"Civil society is about development. Everyone is part of civil society. The capacity of elders and ulemas should be increased and they should form mobile groups to go to the far off districts and promote civil society as they have the respect of the community. Train them to be the messengers."

-- Haji Abdul Rasheed, Kandahar Ulemas' Council member

SECURITY INCIDENTS

From March 2-22, there were 11 hostile attacks. Six directly affected USAID operations. On March 9, a USAID-built health clinic in Kandahar Province was set on fire by unknown insurgents. The clinic sustained major damage. The clinic was already turned over to the Ministry of Public Health for use.

The main purpose of the security incident graph is to provide a general update on security incidents as they relate to reconstruction in Afghanistan. The graph is simply a mechanism for tracking security incidents and does not analyze incidents or attempt to discern the motives or affiliation of the perpetrators. The focus of the graph is the frequency of incidents and their impact on USAID's work and also that of the development community writ large. The graph does not attempt to track all incidents regularly faced in Afghanistan.

USAID/AFGHANISTAN Hostile Attacks by Month

